

us out of Heaven not to have used it once per day, then it might well be questioned if that would be sufficient, and the conscientious man might properly be goaded on to multiply indefinitely prayers of this character, so as to make still more possible his final salvation. So it will be seen at a glance that there is no possibility of escaping an inconsequential conclusion along this line of reasoning.

But we think one will look in vain for any better results along any other line of argumentation.

Of course, we are aware that the manner of many is to leave the clear track of connected argument in this thing, and either deal in denunciations or in the use of their descriptive powers concerning the infinite and finite.

But our argument here is, that when evidently no man has Scripture authority for excluding a believer from the kingdom of Glory because he does not measure up to any prescribed rule concerning the number of times confession of inbred sin should be made, that manifestly he can leave his brother Christian entirely in the hands of his Master, concerning this thing.

With the Arminian this argument is even stronger, for, according to his creed, the believer may be freed from inbred sin in this life, and so be fitted for the purity of Heaven even before the hour and article of death.

Can it, we ask, be anything more than solemn trifling for him to arraign a believer in whom depravity has been destroyed, concerning the number of times he uses the petition, "Forgive us our sins?" Suppose, as in the case of some of the Galt friends, the plea is given that for a lengthened period of time thanksgiving and joy in the Lord so abounded in their experience, that they actually crowded out the prayer for forgiveness, what Arminian, we ask will undertake to find fault?

But, say many of both schools, confession of sin is in the Lord's prayer, and, therefore, it is right that all the obedient followers of Christ should confess sin to God.

Now, we accept, without reserve, this prayer, as given by the Saviour as a

model prayer; and, moreover, this question can safely be left to stand or fall by this rule.

But this prayer concerning forgiveness makes no reference whatever to the subject in hand. This statement may surprise some who imagine they have studied the subject with care, and have built up their creed concerning confession of inbred sin, or confession of sin because of the disparity between the infinite and finite, chiefly on the one sentence, "Forgive us our debts (sins), as we forgive our debtors."

Now it will be evident to even the surface observer, that the kind and measurement of our confession to God concerning sin is given in the words as *we forgive our debtors*. But we ask, is any other confession called for between man and man, than that which should follow when actual, definite wrong has been done? Indeed, in one version it takes the definite form of a positive debt owed by one to another, a debt whose magnitude is known clearly and distinctly. We have, then, the debtor asking release from his creditor concerning a definite sum of money known to them both. When the creditor forgives his brother this definite debt, it is in order for him to ask God to forgive him after this sort, that is, to forgive him the definite sin or sins confessed.

Moreover, as no man is required to ask forgiveness of another unless he is conscious of an offence committed; and no man is requested to forgive another unless the other has really committed an offence and asks for forgiveness; so, unless the words of this prayer are utterly misleading, no man is taught by this prayer to ask forgiveness of God unless he is conscious of a definite act or acts of transgression. Hence, we maintain strongly that the teaching of this prayer is confined absolutely to actual transgressions, and has no bearing whatever on the subject in hand.

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BLESSED is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.—*George Eliot*.